

11/21/75

COMMENTS ON SCAG COMMENTS RE SECRETARIAL SURVEY:

III. FINDINGS:

A. Position Titles:

We have particularized titles for those positions whose duties are predominately not secretarial nor clerical in nature: i.e.

Administrative Assistant  
Operational Support Assistant  
Intelligence Operations Research Assistant  
Information Control Assistant

If the functions of a particular position currently titled secretary-steno, secretary-typist (or anything else) are found to fall into the above listed series and titles, the position should be retitled. This was not the case with the 45 DDO positions audited.

B. Position Grades:

(1) SCAG's View of Management Committee decision re the secretarial pattern is obviously incorrect.

(2) No one disputes the fact that Agency secretaries abroad have the burden of maintaining cover, and might become targets of the opposition. However, this can also be said of other Agency personnel stationed abroad. In addition, Americans in the private sector and those assigned to other government agencies also have been targets of kidnapers and assassination groups. Anyone who goes overseas must accept these hazards as part of the job.

Such hardships are not job classification factors, per se. However, as you all know, certain allowances are paid to overseas personnel as additional compensation for having to live under conditions different from Washington, D.C. Some of these are Post Allowance, Post Differential, and Cost of Living Allowance.

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(3) The costs involved in upgrading the secretarial pattern-- an option not accepted by the Management Committee incidentally (17 November 1975)--would be great, because all Agency secretarial grades would be affected. It would not be equitable to apply any upgradings only to the DDO.

The most important element of grade classification is function-- what are the duties performed worth by comparison within or outside the Agency. As noted in the PMCD paper, when classified under the CSC Secretarial Standards, the 45 jobs reviewed in the DDO should, in the majority of cases, be allocated one to two grades lower than the pattern calls for. Another fact which gains little notice is that the pattern grades are maximum, and can be lowered.

The Management Committee has agreed that raising the pattern by one grade is impractical and not justified. The positions themselves, when allocated on their own merits, do not justify upgradings.

(4) It was noted in the PMCD report that of 127 separations in 1973 and 1974 of secretaries (Q318 series) in grades GS-07, GS-08, GS-09, only two were for reasons of advancement. We obviously have no way of knowing if those who cited other reasons were telling the truth or not, and we suspect that SCAG does not either.

If better paying secretarial positions are available elsewhere, one wonders why more secretaries don't leave for them and state proudly their reasons for doing so.

C. Secretarial Comments/Complaints:

(1) We agree that under-utilization is a supervisory/management problem and should be solved accordingly. It is hoped that supervisors will gain an awareness of the problem and work with their secretaries to make the latters' jobs more meaningful.

Of the 45 DDO secretaries interviewed, two, a GS-09 and a GS-07 indicated that they were currently being under-utilized. Since these positions were recommended for upgrading by the DDO, there should have been no cases of under-utilization. All indicated that they had had positions where they felt they were not being utilized properly according to their skills, ability, and desire to take on responsibility.

(2) Promotion Policies:

a & b. We have to agree that secretaries who do not progress beyond GS-07 are indeed frustrated. That, however, is one of the hazards of the field. Every career field has its limits and this is one of the things one should consider when one enters it. Increasing the number of positions above grade GS-07 by arbitrarily extending the secretarial pattern would only solve the problem for the short term. When all the spaces were filled at the higher levels, the frustration would begin all over again. The problem is that little headroom at the higher levels ~~that~~ is created by attrition in the secretarial field. In the officer ranks, the higher graded persons are continually retiring and providing headroom for those in the lower ranks. This is the only justification

for PRA promotions in the officer category.

c. Advancement Limitations:

The grade ranges in all occupational categories are established by comparison of function with like jobs elsewhere. We have previously discussed in III. B. (3) what such comparisons would do to secretarial grades. The Secretarial Pattern provides the greater benefit in most cases.

D. Lack of Interest in Other Career Fields:

(1) Perhaps we should define the terms Professional and Clerical as used by CIA and by Civil Service:

a. Agency Definition: (from the Handbook of Position Titles and Occupational Codes, 1 April 1975, p.1)

"Professional Positions -- This category includes staff, contract, and military positions involving performance of work considered Managerial, Administrative Management, Scientific, Intelligence, Engineering, Legal, Investigative, or Educative -- which requires the analysis and solution of problems and the determination of action involving the exercise of judgment and initiative. Normally a baccalaureate degree or equivalent training is required; but demonstrated ability, experience, and potential may be substituted."

"Clerical Positions -- This category includes staff, contract, and military positions involving performance of work in support of professional or technical functions requiring a general knowledge of the activity and the use of judgment in the practical application of such knowledge. The individual normally

acquires these skills and knowledge through a high school education supplemented by specialized or on-the-job training."

b. Civil Service Definition:

Professional, as defined by Attachment 2 to FPM

Letter 551-1: "Professional occupations or series are those that require knowledge on a field of science or learning customarily and characteristically acquired through education and training that meets the requirements for a bachelor's or higher degree with major study in or pertinent to the specialized field, as distinguished from general education. The work of professional positions is creative, analytical, evaluative, or interpretive; and is characterized by personal responsibility to keep abreast of and exercise judgment and broad perspective in the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations and to improve the data, materials, and methods."

"Administrative occupations are occupations, other than professional occupations, that require the kind of knowledge, evaluation judgement and breadth of outlook expected of competent college graduates. Employees are required to apply this breadth of knowledge and perspective in solving problems for which guides, precedents, and instructions are not fully controlling. Quality of judgement required at the full performance levels depends primarily on reasoning ability and perceptiveness rather than on knowledge, gained through first hand experience or otherwise, of how prior similar cases, problems, etc. have been treated or decided upon."  
(att. 2 to FPM ltr 551-1).

Clerical positions, as defined by X-118 (General Administrative, Clerical, and Office Services Group) involve the orderly processing of the papers and performance of the routine work supporting an office or organization. Within a framework of procedure, regulations, precedents, and instructions, clerks process and maintain the records and written materials which represent the transactions or business of the office or organization served. Among the basic duties which may be performed are for example: (1) maintaining records; (2) receiving, screening, reviewing, and verifying documents; (3) searching for and compiling information and data; (4) providing a central source of information on the activities of the organization orally or by correspondence; (5) preparing and/or verifying the validity of documents with which the organization is concerned, etc."

A secretary (this position is included in this same series) "is the principal personal office assistant to a designated supervisor and has a close and direct working relationship to him. The secretary is normally accorded <sup>confidence</sup> ~~confidence~~ in all matters relating to the program and organization within the supervisor's jurisdiction, and the work is closely identified with the superior's viewpoint and responsibilities. Duties are immediately auxiliary to the work of the superior and are part of a broader and more inclusive responsibility which the secretary has for participating in his work by relieving him of details of administration..... The grade levels of secretarial positions vary with the scope of the supervisor's administrative responsibility, with the extent of the secretary's participation in the work of the supervisor, and with the knowledges, skills, and abilities required."

The Agency definition of professional incorporates the professional and administrative definitions as stated by CSC. The Agency clerical definition is comparable to that of the CSC definition. The secretarial series falls into this clerical group. No stigma should be attached to that fact.

Again, based on functions performed, the secretary is paid an adequate salary--in fact, more than adequate in those cases where the Secretarial Pattern gives the employee a benefit which would not be there if the positions were graded on their own merits.

IV. OTHER CAREER FIELDS AVAILABLE TO SECRETARIES:

Little more can be said on this issue. If a secretary wants to continue being a secretary, she must accept the fact that there are limitations to the grade to which she can aspire. Every career field has its limitations, which should be taken into consideration prior to entry into the field.

V. COURSES OF ACTION AVAILABLE:

A. The Secretarial Pattern was created to give secretaries a grade structure which would encompass the level of activity of the supervisor and the degree of participation in that work performed by the secretary. The benefit of the doubt was given to the secretary--ie. the highest degree of participation were incorporated in the structure. Use of the Pattern obviates the need to reaudit secretarial positions each time a supervisor or secretary changes. It makes unnecessary the battles which raged and the inequities in grades which resulted prior to the inception of the Secretarial Pattern. It is very nice to say that "a secretary's grade should be commensurate with her skills and abilities and with the actual duties she is obliged to perform in her particular position, " until the grade is lowered.

Position classification cannot be carried on in a vacuum. Comparisons must be made with other similar jobs as well as position standards in order to retain grade equity. Thus, in the case of secretaries, we did make comparisons with the Standards and with other agencies--State, NSA, DIA--to determine if the Pattern was still viable. The alternative to the Pattern, as stated above, is the chaos which would result from auditing secretarial positions each time a supervisor or secretary was reassigned.

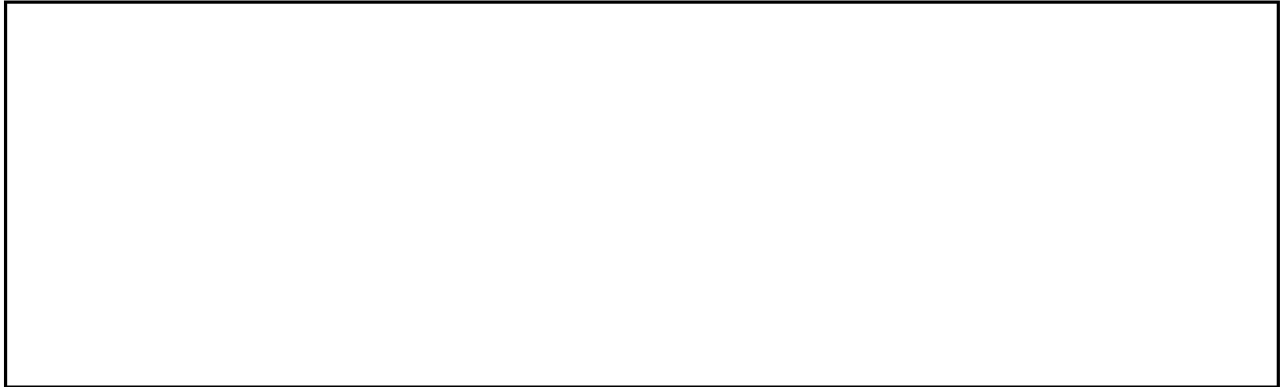
It is difficult at best to compare gross numbers of secretaries who work for the Foreign Service and are graded at particular levels and those who work for CIA at particular grade levels. The bases from which you are drawing your numbers are different. In other words, there are a greater number of Foreign Service Secretaries than CIA secretaries to begin with, so there is nothing surprising about the fact that there are more of the former at various grade levels than the latter (ie. There are

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It is interesting to note that the emphasis in SCAG's paper is placed on secretarial positions overseas. No one disagrees that secretaries, as well as officers, work harder and participate in more varied activities overseas. The suggestion was made in the Management Committee Meeting to have temporary promotions for secretaries while they were overseas. This suggestion was discarded as impractical because very few people have ever been downgraded, and the headroom as well as placement problems would worsen if they were not. Additionally, such a practice would be labeled as discrimination unless it were extended to all categories of employees overseas.



Any changes to the Secretarial grade structure --GS-07 and above-- would have to be made universally throughout the Agency. That number



viewed in these terms, the costs are considerable. In any event, the extension of the pattern is no longer an issue since the 17 November 1975 Management Committee decision to leave it as is.

B. UPGRADE CERTAIN SECRETARIAL POSITIONS ON AN INCUMBENCY

ALLOCATION BASIS:

No further comment required.

C. EXTEND PRA PROMOTION POLICY TO COVER SECRETARIES:

The rationale for allowing PRA promotions of officers but not clerical employees was explained under III. C. (2).

D. MAKE NO CHANGE IN THE SECRETARIAL TITLE OR GRADE PATTERN BUT SEEK TO IMPROVE AGENCY PRACTICES REGARDING THE UTILIZATION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION, AND CAREER MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF SECRETARIES:

1. Secretarial Utilization and Advancement Opportunities;

Secretaries must make a choice of career based on an honest appraisal of work involved and levels to be attained.

2. Expansion of Formalized Career Service Management of the Secretarial/Clerical Employee Group:

No additional comment required.

As stated in paras. I and II of the memo forwarded to Chief, Plans Staff, DDO on 25 September 1975, the sixty-two positions evaluated were those recommended by the four Directorates for upgrading. All the positions in Headquarters were audited, including the forty-five submitted by the DDO. The comments included in the report were made by these secretaries.